AMTRUNK Operation - Interim Working Draft, Dated 14 February 1977, with Attachments

AMTRUNK Operation

INTERIM WORKING DRAFT 14 February 1977

1. It is possible that the AMTRUNK Operation might have been a political action operation run against the U.S.G./CIA. (See the separate memorandum on "Operations to Split the Castro Regime.")

2. In late 1962 or early 1963, pressure was exerted on CIA by Higher Authority (State Department and the White House) to consider a proposal for an on-island operation to split the CASTRO regime. The proposal was presented to Mr. HURWITCH, the State Department Cuban Coordinator, by Tad SZULC[1] (AMCAPE-1) of the New York Times. On 6 February 1963, Albert C. DAVIES, (Lt. Col. on military detail to WH/4 - Cuba) met with SZULC at SZULC's residence, to discuss the plan.[2] SZULC referred to it as the "Leonardo Plan." While at first hesitant, SZULC finally revealed that Dr. Nestor MORENO (AMICE-27)[3] was one of its prime originators. SZULC said that he first thought of bringing the plan to the attention of President KENNEDY, as he had had a standing invitation, since November 1961, for direct contact with President KENNEDY, Attorney General KENNEDY, or Mr. McGeorge BUNDY, on matters concerning Cuba. He decided against that approach, however, and instead determined to use the Cuban Coordinating Group. SZULC later said that George VOLSKY[4] (AMTRUNK-1) masterminded the plan, assisted by MORENO. It was agreed that CIA representatives would meet with SZULC and the two Leonardo planners, MORENO and VOLSKY, in Washington.

The follow-up meeting on 9 February (in a safehouse) was attended by HURWITCH, Tad SZULC, Jorge VOLSKY, Dr. Nestor MORENO, and David MORALES, Col. A. DAVIES and Alfonso RODRIGUEZ of the CIA.

3. A 11 February 1963 memorandum from RODRIGUEZ to the Chief, SAS, expressed definite interest in the operation with certain recommendations which included having JMWAVE Station put its operational mechanism into gear to have the Cuban personnel of the operation (now called AMTRUNK) ready for infiltration by mid-March 1963. Following a review of the AMTRUNK Project, JMWAVE forwarded a lengthy dispatch to Headquarters[5], dated 8 April 1963, which recommended that the operation be terminated soonest. Since it was a Headquarters originated operation, JMWAVE also requested Headquarters decision as to continuance or termination. A Headquarters cable to JMWAVE on 10 April 1963 concurred that the AMTRUNK operation should be terminated for a number of reasons, including the fact that CIA could not at that time be certain that hostile elements were unaware of the plan. A 17 April 1963 cable from Headquarters to JMWAVE Station advised that SZULC had informed HURWITCH that JMWAVE had given VOLSKY responsibility to decide whether or not the operation was to continue. It seems that Headquarters had intended to use VOLSKY, with his concurrence, only as a funding channel for the AMTRUNK operation if the AMTRUNK principals were willing to proceed with the operation independently. In any case, for some reason, CIA continued to

support the operation. The two principals, MORENO (AMICE-27) and Miguel A. DIAZ Isalgue (AMICE-14) claimed to have contact with high-level GOC officials. They completed four infiltration missions to Cuba and were terminated in March 1964.

4. Early phases of the operation resulted in the on-island recruitment of Ramon Tomas GUIN Diaz (AMTRUNK-10), Modesto Orlando OROZCO Basulto (AMTRUNK-9), and Carlos PEDRAZA Aguilar (AMTRUNK-11). GUIN was arrested in February 1966. (CUBELA was arrested at the same time, separately.) OROZCO, after reportedly running scared, was exfiltrated and terminated in March 1964. He returned to Cuba in December 1964 on an independent exfiltration mission and apparently remained in Cuba. There is some speculation that he might have been G-2. His knowledge of the identity of internal AMTRUNK agents, caused a planned infiltration mission to be scrapped. PEDRAZA was arrested in December 1965, tried for alleged CIA activities and given a 30 year prison sentence. JMWAVE Station advised in March 1966 that four former AMTRUNK internal assets were arrested for counterrevolutionary activities during early 1966, in addition to CUBELA and GUIN, and that all of the principals of the AMTRUNK network active during 1963 and 1964 had been rolled up. The Cuban press reportedly identified DIAZ (AMICE-14) as the clandestine infiltree who recruited GUIN.

<u>COMMENT</u>: It appears that the opposition might have succeeded in obtaining CIA financial and material support for an operation which was controlled by the planners. They succeeded, it seems, in identifying, neutralizing, and exposing

on-island anti-Castro forces, and tying up CIA time, money, and manpower for an operation of their own creation. Following are some reasons which might have contributed to its failure:

a. The controversial nature of the principal initiators, Tad SZULC, Jorge VOLSKY and MORENO. The AMTRUNK operatives made it known that they were anti-U.S.G. and anti-CIA and accepted assistance only to accomplish their own purposes. They were not under CIA control.

b. SZULC, although reportedly not directly involved in the operation, was kept fully informed of its activities by MORENO and perhaps others.

c. SZULC's direct contact with the White House, if true, placed him in a position to pass U.S. policy information on Cuba to the opposition. (There is a note by Richard Helms on a 23 September 1963 cover sheet requesting Alfonso RODRIGUEZ to maintain periodic contact with SZULC on Cuban matters at Presidential request going back many months.)

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d. RABEL (AMLEO-3), who "defected" to the U.S. in 1962, was knowledgeable of on-island AMTRUNK targets. RABEL, following termination, returned to Cuba allegedly to bring out his family, and never returned. There is a possibility that he was a CASTRO agent.

e. CUBELA was knowledgeable of at least some of the AMTRUNK agents. GUIN (AMTRUNK-10) was a codefendant in the CUBELA trial. (Believe GUIN may have been given a stiffer sentence than CUBELA and may still be in prison.)

CUBELA was given a relatively light sentence, considering the magnitude of the crime. Immediately following sentencing he functioned as a prison physician, and reportedly was driving a jeep unescorted, which is unusual treatment unless one is trusted by the regime. He reportedly is now practicing medicine as a private physician in Havana.

f. The questionable activities and current whereabouts of AMTRUNK-9. We have learned of the other AMTRUNK agents who were wrapped up but we have been unable to determine precisely where AMTRUNK-9 is. There is some indication that he might have been G-2.

g. There was overlap with other operations: the AMLILAC's, placing CUBELA cache, etc.

NOTE: Cables cited in this paper, and other selected papers from the AMTRUNK Project, are readily available in the LAD/JFK Task Force office for review if needed.

LAD/JFK Task Force/Chris Hopkins:rp

14 February 1977

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Tadeusz (Tad) Witold SZULC (AMCAPE-1) (201-50539)

1. SZULC was born on 25 July 1926 in Warsaw, Poland. He arrived in Brazil from Lisbon on 3 August 1940, and came to the U.S. in October 1947 under sponsorship of U.S. Ambassador John C. WILEY, the husband of his mother's sister. He became a correspondent for the New York Times (NYT) in 1953, and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1954 by a special Congressional bill.

2. SZULC has been under suspicion as a hostile foreign agent since 1948 when the FBI reported (apparently from a [redacted] source) that he was a Communist. He brought himself to the attention of CIA in August 1959 in Santiago, Chile by claiming (falsely) to be "cleared" and requesting contact with an Agency representative. This was the first of many such incidents in Latin America, and resulted in a warning to all Latin American Stations to beware of SZULC and his efforts to interview Agency personnel. It also resulted in continuing watch of his movements and activities because they represented a threat to the cover of Agency personnel. By 1960 his reputation was so widespread that several different CIA officers called for an investigation that would clear up "once and for all" his suspected connections with a hostile intelligence service. He was in frequent contact with Communist Party leaders and functionaries throughout Latin America, constantly sought out and elicited information from U.S. Embassy officers,

frequently mentioning the name of other CIA officers with whom he was acquainted.

3. Although the suspicions have increased, and SZULC's anti-Agency activities have become much more serious and blatant in the 1970's, it has not been possible to clear up any of the suspicions about his motives or his possible connections with a foreign intelligence service. There have been numerous reviews of his files and the interest in his activities has extended from the case officer level to the DCI. In fact, it is not possible to come to any clear conclusion about this man, and the notes below are simply illustrative of the kinds of things that keep the suspicions alive. It is important to note that SZULC's activities can be explained by the combination of his personality, ambition, and the demands on an investigative reporter for the NYT. He is an aggressive, insensitive, and persistent journalist with the family connections (Ambassador Wiley) and ability to develop the kinds of contacts appropriate to a successful correspondent for a paper like the NYT.

4. Nevertheless, there are elements throughout his entire career that are almost designed to arouse suspicion. For example, a British source in Rio de Janeiro (see Attachment A) reported that SZULC was "directed" by the Polish regime in Warsaw to seek employment in U.S. journalistic circles. This report runs like a thread throughout his file and is repeated and garbled in several versions over the years. The report

has never been adequately explained and was apparently never reported in full to London by the British representative in Rio. This report and other questions that arose early in his career (his contacts with a cousin who was a Press Attache in the Polish Embassy in Rio) were, however, just the earliest elements that aroused suspicion.

5. Because he became so well-known to so many Agency officers, his name and reputation have become subject of discussion on many occasions. One senior operations officer stated in 1975 that a Soviet agent could not be more beneficial to the Soviets and the Communist cause than SZULC has been. Although he presented a generally anti-Communist view prior to quitting the NYT in 1972, it is noteworthy that he arranged extensive, favorable TV coverage of the Communist-dominated Ligas Campesinas in Northeast Brazil and that one of the most important anti-Castro operations, AMTRUNK, in which he was involved from the beginning, was disastrous for all participants. More indicative of his true beliefs, however, are the articles he has written since Watergate. They have become increasingly critical of the CIA and of the USG generally and have damaged U.S. image and prestige.

6. The notes below are somewhat random examples of elements in SZULC's file that bring him under suspicion. As mentioned above, they in no way point to a firm conclusion. For further information on SZULC during the period 1963 - 1964, see the CI review prepared at Miami Station on Jorge VOLSKY in 1964.

a. The 1948 FBI report that SZULC was involved in supplying the Polish Legation in Rio with information from his personal contacts and from Ambassador John C. Wiley has been repeated in various versions throughout SZULC's file. The FBI has found similar allegations made by other sources who knew SZULC at that time. In addition, several sources have mentioned SZULC's relations with his cousin, Ignacy SACHS, who was the Press Attache in the Polish Embassy in 1947 and 1948, although there is no indication that SACHS had intelligence connections.

b. SZULC's marriage to the daughter of the American manager of the English language newspaper in Rio de Janeiro, the Herald, lasted only until SZULC had permanent residence in the U.S. and appears to have been carried through for that purpose.

c. By 1949 (SZULC was only 23) he had come to the attention of the Rio Station because of his dealings with the Polish Legation and because investigation revealed his father had some (apparently innocent) business dealings with Russians visiting Brazil from Mexico.

d. In 1954, about a year after he was hired by the NYT, SZULC obtained a sensational story, by telephone, from a Communist leader in Guatemala. This launched his career with the NYT.

e. In 1956 SZULC was investigating Brazilian nuclear policy for the NYT. Although a legitimate topic, it was somewhat unusual for him and the timing seems unusual for NYT interest.

f. In 1959, on a trip to Santiago, Chile, SZULC claimed to be "cleared" and requested an interview with an Agency representative. This was the first of numerous such requests. In addition, it was in about 1959 that he also began making a point of telling Agency personnel the names of other Agency officers he had identified.

g. An article SZULC wrote on Cuba for the NYT in December 1959 was hailed as an antidote to the excessively favorable reports of his colleague, Herbert MATTHEWS, but in fact his article was largely favorable to Fidel CASTRO and to CASTRO's plans for Cuba. It is only in comparison with MATTHEWS blatantly pro-CASTRO articles that SZULC's piece can be considered balanced.

h. By September 1960, SZULC was in the forefront of those advocating action against CASTRO. (It was he who finally brought the Leonardo Plan to Washington in 1963. See AMTRUNK Operational paper).

i. In April 1961, shortly after John F. KENNEDY was innaugurated, SZULC was transferred to Washington by the NYT. Although a reasonable transfer, it is noteworthy that in a very short time SZULC claimed that he had a standing invitation to go directly to the President, the Vice President, the Attorney General, McGeorge BUNDY and Robert HURWITCH on Cuban matters.

j. SZULC persistently sought a continuing contact with an Agency representative in Washington shortly after he arrived until it was granted in December 1962. The first contact was with Albert C. DAVIES (Lt. Col. on military detail to CIA - Cuba), and was arranged at the behest of Colonel GROGAN, the Assistant to the Director, on SZULC's request.

k. In early 1963, at President KENNEDY's urging, contact with SZULC was made into a formal relationship and was continued until October 1964. The meetings were used by SZULC to cross check his information from other sources, including various Cuban exiles and the Department of State. He became, by virtue of his contacts with the exile community and throughout Washington, one of the most knowledgeable people in the area of Cuban affairs, anti-CASTRO activities, and U.S. Government policy. (See CI study on Jorge VOLSKY for more information on this period.)

l. The Agency officer, Alfonso RODRIGUEZ, who maintained official contact with SZULC in 1963 and 1964 said in July 1964:

> "The special friendship and mutual admiration society that has existed between Tad SZULC, Jorge VOLSKY, and Manuel RAY and the JURE is not something that is transparent or easily explained. This alliance may be something unholy and Machiavellian; I just do not know, but I can find no evidence to prove it."

m. Another officer, Seymour Young, wrote in 1965:

"After reading and re-reading this man's various files, I began to feel that this man in his position would be an ideal 'agent of influence'. It was noted that he is always in a crisis area and usually in advance of the crisis and writes articles which are more concerned with the Communist successes."

n. In about August 1965, SZULC was sent to Madrid as the NYT representative for Spain and Portugal. He stayed overseas until December 1968. He was present in Prague during the Soviet invasion of August 1968 and in December he was expelled, apparently for being too inquisitive. However, the West German Service has remained suspicious of the circumstances of SZULC's expulsion and the details have never been clarified. (It is interesting that SZULC wrote articles reflecting the official CZECH line concerning the defection of General Jan SEJNA who was in the Czech Intelligence service.)

o. SZULC was reported by an FBI source to have gone horseback riding with Boris V. YAROCHEVSKIY, a suspect KGB officer, in Washington in June or July 1971. SZULC's file reflects no regular contact with Bloc diplomats.

p. In 1972 and 1973 SZULC covered Watergate extensively and demonstrated an extreme bias against the CIA. By July 1972, SZULC's inquiries of the Department of State and his articles had taken on a distinctly anti-US Government tone. His coverage of guerrilla and terrorist groups

was less sure than in earlier days and was frequently sensationalist and full of inaccuracies. (See, especially, article in NYT for 14 July 1972 on a terrorist Headquarters in Zurich and other wild statements.)

q. Since 1974 SZULC's articles have been highly critical of the Agency and he has used the background information he gathered in the 1960's to attack the Agency and to criticize its operations.

r. In May 1975 SZULC accused the Agency of rifling the files of U.S. Senators. This was only one of many irresponsible and false articles he wrote trying to discredit the Agency. One of the more spectacular efforts was a series in Esquire magazine, in which, among other things, he charged that the U.S. intelligence community had a hidden budget of $25 billion dollars and a network of 200,000 spies.

s. In, Inside the Company: A CIA Diary, Philip AGEE credits SZULC's daughter, Nicole, for having "obtained vital research materials in New York and Washington, D.C." There is reason to believe, particularly in view of the extreme views Tad SZULC has manifested in the past two years, that he may have aided his daughter in her "research."

SUMMATION

The case against Tad SZULC as a foreign agent is weak. However, his most recent activities are entirely consonant with the view that he has already served the Soviets well and can

end his career as an overt propagandist taking advantage of the current furor over the CIA to do the greatest possible damage. The current paralysis of all anti-Communist action by the Agency attests to the effectiveness of AGEE, SZULC, the Soviets, et al.

NOTE: (See attachment B from a highly sensitive source. Any use of the SECRET/SENSITIVE attachment requires C/CI approval.) The source reported that Nicole, while working with the DGI in Cuba to expose the Agency, said that except for her father, her whole family were "fascists." She said that her father quit the NYT because of the restrictive editorial policy and he wished to write according to his beliefs.

LAD/JFK Tas Force 1977/Marty Miller:rp
2 Attachments, a/s
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